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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: READOUT OF ITALY-UKRAINE BILATERAL SUMMIT

CLASSIFIED BY: CLASSIFIED BY POL M/C TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B)
AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: ON OCTOBER 14 MFA COUNSELOR FOR NIS AFFAIRS LORENZO ORTONA GAVE POLOFFS A READOUT OF PRIME MINISTER SILVIO BERLUSCONI'S OCTOBER 8 BILATERAL MEETING WITH UKRAINE PRESIDENT LEONID KUCHMA FOLLOWING THE EU-UKRAINE SUMMIT IN YALTA. ORTONA REPORTED THAT BOTH LEADERS UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING TO OFFER SUPPORT TO THE U.S. DURING THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS IN IRAQ. BERLUSCONI OFFERED ENCOURAGEMENT AND ASSISTANCE FOR KIEV IN ITS EFFORTS TO JOIN THE EU AND THE WTO. KUCHMA TOUTED UKRAINE'S PROGRESS BUT CONCEDED THAT IT STILL HAD WORK TO DO. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) BERLUSCONI AND KUCHMA EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY OF REMAINING ALLIED WITH THE U.S. ON IRAQ DURING RECONSTRUCTION. BOTH SPOKE OF THEIR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIP WITH THE U.S. REGARDLESS OF THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC SUPPORT IN THEIR COUNTRIES--ESPECIALLY IN UKRAINE. IN ADDITION, BERLUSCONI RECOMMENDED TO KUCHMA THAT UKRAINE INCREASE ITS EFFORTS TO HELP BROKER A SOLUTION TO THE MOLDOVA/TRANSNISTRIAN CONFLICT, WHICH COULD ONLY HELP UKRAINE'S EU ASPIRATIONS.

13. (C) ECONOMIC ISSUES DOMINATED MUCH OF THE MEETING. ORTONA SAID THAT KUCHMA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT UKRAINE STILL NEEDED TO EARN INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AS A FREE MARKET ECONOMY. KUCHMA CLAIMED, HOWEVER, THAT UKRAINE HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN INCREASING ITS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AND HOPED THESE INDICATORS POINTED TOWARDS UKRAINE ACCESSION TO THE EU BY 2011. UKRAINE ALSO EXPECTED TO HAVE DOUBLED ITS GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT WITHIN THAT PERIOD. BERLUSCONI OFFERED ITALY'S HELP IN UKRAINE'S EFFORTS TO JOIN THE WTO AND THE EU. BOTH EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM FOR PURSUING CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLANNED TRIESTE-TO-KIEV SUPERHIGHWAY (CORRIDOR 5), ONE OF THE ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY'S PRIORITIES.

14. (C) BERLUSCONI AND KUCHMA DISCUSSED TWO AREAS OF CONTENTION: ADOPTION AND VISA PROCEDURES. BERLUSCONI RAISED THE DIFFICULTY ITALIAN COUPLES OFTEN HAD IN DEALING WITH EXCESSIVE RED TAPE NECESSARY TO ADOPT UKRAINIAN CHILDREN. KUCHMA MADE AN APPEAL FOR SIMPLIFYING THE VISA REGIME FOR UKRAINIANS, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE NEW MEMBERS--THREE OF WHICH BORDER UKRAINE--JOIN THE EU.
SEMBLER

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